

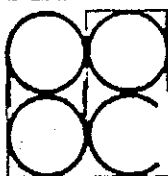
Potomac Electric Power Company  
422 Eighth Street, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-573

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
278-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127



PENNSYLVANIA  
AVENUE  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

425 13TH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

GENERAL CONSULTANTS

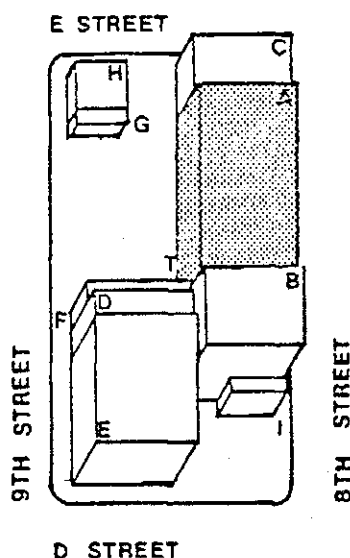
ANDERSON, HOTTER / MARIANI  
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
DEVROUX & PURNELL  
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS  
DAVID McLAREN, HAAT & ASSOCIATES  
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
MONK, DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES  
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

HABS  
DC,  
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Potomac Electric Power Company  
422 Eighth Street, NW  
Lot 812



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 407, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 407, see HABS No. DC-516.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

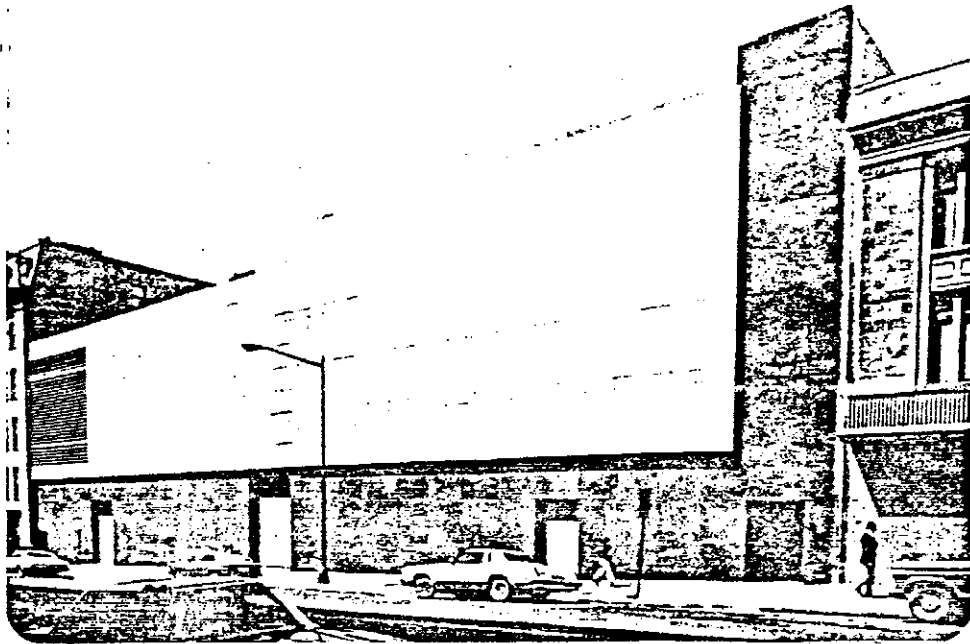
This Potomac Electric Power Company Substation was built in 1957 (Building Permit No. B22543, 4-22-1957, no architect mentioned). The site is located in the northeast quadrant of the square, between D and E Streets on Eighth Street. The building covers an area one hundred seventy-eight feet wide by one hundred feet deep. Flanked by a commercial warehouse and sporting goods outlet, it achieves great visual impact through its size and scale which are emphasized by the absence of ornamental articulation in the traditional sense.

The building's Eighth Street expansive facade features a gray granite base organized in a large grid composition. This base is pierced by four asymmetrical entrances which provide the sole punctuation of the surface. Above, the building volume is expressed as two slightly projecting masses, one somewhat higher than the other, but flush in a single facade plane. The entire surface is clad in cream-colored metal panels. Throughout, windows are absent. On the south end of the upper facade mass there is an area occupied by large louvers that provide internal ventilation.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The aggressive horizontal proportions and stylistic manipulation of the PEPCO building exemplifies the architectural expression which proliferated internationally in the first half of the Twentieth Century. It is consistent with these architectural features: The massive facade is characterized by planar severity, a recourse toward the logical, mechanistic, simplistic whole, and overall geometric rationale. It is inconsistent in its urban context: too large and much too visually demanding, it is incapable of complimenting or redefining architectural harmony with neighboring structures.

November 1980



EIGHTH STREET FACADE

Lots 12 and 13 (Sublot 808)  
430 8th Street

Lot no. 808 was a slender rectangular area located in the south (third) part of original Lots 12 and 13. (No building permits are available until 1957.)

1877

to

1878.....Henry Payne, a barber, was listed in the City Directories as occupant.

1900.....A restaurant, owned by Jacob Bruegger, had been established at 430 8th Street (City Directories).

1905

to

1906.....James Stevens owned a restaurant at 430 8th Street (City Directories).

1915

to

1923.....Mackenzie Brothers, sellers of wholesale hats, were listed in the City Directories as tenants.

1924

to

1925....."No listing" in the City Directories.

1929

to

1934.....Commercial Office Furniture Company was listed at 430 8th Street (City Directories).

1937

to

1943.....Commercial Office Furniture Company was listed at 430 8th Street (City Directories).

1957.....Sublot 808 had become associated with original Lots 16, 15 and 14, forming an area used by PEPCO, as a substation. (Refer to Lot 14 for building permit information.)

Lot 14 (Sublot 809)  
426-428 8th Street

When platted in 1872 (Bastert) Lot 14 was an "L-Shaped" area, situated in a northeast section of the square. By 1903, the intrusion of Lot 12 (in the upper western part of the lot) had been eliminated: Lot 14 became a rectangular area, approximately 50' x 80' (Baist plat map). The 1965 Baist map showed Lot 14 as part of a complex of lots (808, 15, 16) which formed an area 178'.75" x 100'.

1819.....Until the 1840-1843 tax assessment records, Lot 14 had been divided into two properties, both owned by Gottlieb C. Grammer.

1824.....Grammer's lot assessments were \$198.00 and \$375.00.

1829/33...The assessments were \$451.00 and \$400.00, with a combined improvement value of \$1,700.00.

1840/43...\$765.00 was the lot assessment, still under Grammer's ownership.

1859.....The lot assessment considerably increased to \$3,442.00.

1870.....A \$100.00 improvement value was listed in the records. No owner was mentioned.

1878/79...Christopher Grammer was assessed \$4,398.00 (lot). Jane E. Ross, cigar/tobacco dealer, was located at 426 8th Street (City Directories).

1883/84...The new owners were James Martin and Richard O. Polkinhorn. The assessment was unchanged.

1893/94...The assessed value doubled to \$8,795.00, under the ownership of Martha Polkinhorn (et. al.).

1899/  
1900.....M. Polkinhorn's lot value was \$10,280.00.

1900  
to  
1923.....A period of tenancy in which a hats/caps/furs dealer, photographer, stable/livery owners, and a veterinary surgeon were established at 426-428 8th Street (City Directories).

1937.....Lots 808, 14, 15 and 16 had become one area, 418-430 8th Street. The site was occupied by Steele Garage, an auto parking facility, until 1956.

1938.....An April 4 Building Permit #211495: To install one brick office for parking lot. Cost: \$500.00. Assessed to Lows & Joseph Abrahams & M. J. Manners.

1956.....Building Permit #B19119, December 20: To construct reinforced concrete foundation for building to be constructed as Electric Power Substation.

1957.....Building Permit #B20942, March 8: Erect structural steel as per plans.

Building Permit #22543, April 22: Build steel and concrete electric substation as per plans. Estimated cost: \$1,200,000.00.

Building Permit #B22131, April 22: Install 1 shower, 1 water closet, 1 basin, 1 sink, 1 drinking fountain, 11 floor drains, 2 yard drains, 1 electric water heater. Estimated cost: \$8,000.00.

1981.....A PEPCO substation is located at 418-430 8th Street.

Lot 15  
422-424 8th Street

Platted in 1872 (Bastert plat map), Lot 15 was a rectangular area, measuring approximately 50' x 100'.

1819.....Joseph Scholfield was owner of the lot.

1824.....An approximate \$750.00 assessment was recorded for both the lot and improvements made to the building.

1829/33...Scholfield was assessed \$810.00 (lot) and \$150.00 (improvements).

1840/43...Scholfield's assessment increased \$200.00.

1859.....During this year Lot 15 was divided into north and south properties. The northern lot (20' frontage) was owned by Mary Scholfield, and assessed \$1,800.00. To the south (31' frontage), Henry Janney was assessed \$2,790.00.

1870.....A \$4,000.00 improvement value was assessed to Thomas Williams for Lot 15.

1870  
to

1922.....Several stable/livery owners had occupied the 8th Street building.

1878/79  
and

1883/84...Henry Polkinhorn was assessed \$5,865.00 (lot).

1893/94...Polkinhorn's property doubled to \$11,730.00. A garage, owned by Lansburgh & Bro., operated at the address.

1899/

1900.....The lot assessment decreased slightly to \$10,280.00.

1937  
to

1981.....Refer to Lot 14 for additional information.



Lot 16  
418-420 8th Street

Lot 16 is located in the east, central section of the square. It was originally a rectangular lot, measuring approximately 50' x 100'. By 1965 it had become one of several lots (to the north) which merged, covering an area 178'-75" x 100'.

1819.....The lot was owned by Patrick Donohoo's heirs.

1824.....The lot value was \$771.00, with a \$750.00 improvement value.

1829/33...\$822.00 was the lot value.

1859.....The lot was assessed to George W. Young at a value of \$4,626.00.

1870.....\$2,000.00 was the improvement value.

1878/79...The lot assessment increased to \$5,911.00. Ernest Burgdorf, stable owner, was listed at 418-420 9th Street until 1897.

1883/84...Young's title was transferred to Augustus Burgdorf. The assessment was again \$5,911.00.

1893/94...Burgdorf's assessment doubled to \$11,822.00, with \$4,500.00 total improvements.

1899/  
1900.....The lot, owned by S. Dana Lincoln, was assessed \$10,132.00 and \$4,500.00 (improvements). Frederick W. Behrens, stable owner, occupied 418 8th Street until 1904.

1905  
to  
1936.....Stable owners and garage companies had been established at 418-420 8th Street (City Directories).

1937  
to  
1981.....Refer to Lot 14 for additional information.

## SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment  
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map